

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 BANGKO 16344 01 OF 03 181455Z

43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 PC-15 SNM-02 DEAE-00

CU-04 DRC-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 NIC-01 /168 W

----- 011592

R 181124Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7536

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 BANGKOK 16344

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJ: ONE MISSION OFFICER'S VIEW OF STUDENT POWER IN THAILAND

INTRODUCTION. FOLLOWING IS THE THOUGHTFUL BUT PERSONAL ANALYSIS OF ONE MISSION OFFICER'S VIEW ON THE RECENT EXERCISE OF STUDENT POWER IN THAILAND THAT BROUGHT ABOUT THE FALL OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE ANALYSIS DEALS WITH THAI-POLITICAL HISTORY, THE RECENT BACKGROUND OF THE CURRENT STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AND WHAT THE ANALYST CONSIDERS A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN THE THAI-POLITICAL COMPLEX. THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT EMBASSY VIEWS BUT WE BELIEVE WASHINGTON AGENCIES WILL FIND IT USEFUL.

1. THE RALLYING CRY WAS A CALL FOR A CONSTITUTION. THE SURFACE ISSUE WAS THE ARREST OF THIRTEEN POLITICAL ACTIVISTS--FIVE OF THEM STUDENT LEADERS. DURING THE JUNE 1973 STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS THE RALLYING CRY WAS ALSO A CALL FOR THE CONSTITUTION. TIRAYUDH BOONMEE, THEN SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL STUDENTS CENTER OF THAILAND, DECLARED,

"WE MUST WIN. IF WE STUDENTS AND THE THAI PUBLIC ARE NOT BRAVE ENOUGH TO FIGHT FOR THE CONSTITUTION

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BANGKO 16344 01 OF 03 181455Z

WE WOULD NOT BE GATHERED HERE. BUT THE FIGHT MUST BE WON WITH REASON. WE MUST FIGHT FOR THE CONSTI-

TUTION BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT OF OUR COUNTRY MUST BE RUN BY THE PEOPLE NOT THE MILITARY. WE WANT TO SHOW THE GOVERNMENT THAT WE ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND WANT A PERMANENT CONSTITUTION."

THE SURFACE ISSUE AT THAT TIME WAS THE EXPLUSION OF NINE RAMKHAMHAENG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL FOR ENGAGING IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY. THIRAYUDH WAS AMONG THOSE ARRESTED ON OCTOBER 6, 1973 AND EVENTUALLY FREED BY OCTOBER 13, 1973.

2. WHAT THE STUDENTS HAVE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE YEAR 1973 IS NOTHING LESS THAN A REVOLUTION OF A CHARACTER AND SCOPE UNPRECEDENTED IN THAI POLITICAL HISTORY. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES AND EVENTS OF THIS YEAR WILL HELP DEVELOP OUR PERSPECTIVE ON WHAT THIS MAY MEAN FOR THAILAND'S FUTURE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE STUDENTS BEGAN THE YEAR WITH PROTESTS AGAINST DECREE #299, WHICH WOULD HAVE COMPROMISED THE INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY, AND A PROTEST/BOYCOTT AGAINST THE PREDOMINANCE OF JAPANESE GOODS IN THAI MARKETS. THE LATTER GAVE THEM THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY FOR ORGANIZATION OF STREET DEMONSTRATIONS AND WAS EVEN ENCOURAGED BY THE RTG. IN APRIL THE THUNG YAI HUNTING SCANDAL GAVE THE STUDENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN WITH THE PRESS IN PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE THAI GOVERNMENT TO SEE THAT JUSTICE WAS ACHIEVED AND THAT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BE PUNISHED FOR USING THE PREOGATIVES OF POSITION FOR THEIR OWN PERSONAL ENJOYMENT. IN JUNE THE LARGEST DEMONSTRATIONS EVEN SEEN IN THAILAND WERE LED AND ORGANIZED BY STUDENTS PROTESTING THE EXPLUSION OF NINE RAMKHAMHAENG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO HAD WRITTEN A SATIRE ON THE RECENT DECISION BY THANOM AND PRAPHAT TO EXTEND THEIR TERMS IN OFFICE FOR YET ANOTHER YEAR. THEY WERE IDENTIFIED AS "THE ANIMAL COUNCIL OF THUNG YAI." THERE WAS IRONY AND OMEN LATE ON THE EVENING OF JUNE 21, 1973. JUST AS
UNCLASSIFIED
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BANGKO 16344 01 OF 03 181455Z

A BOLT OF LIGHTENING LIT UP THE SKY A STUDENT DROPPED A BLACK SHROUD OVER THE CONSTITUTION ON THE DEMOCRACY MONUMENT. HE AND HIS FOLLOWERS THEN DEMANDED A CONSTITUTION IN SIX MONTHS, NOT THREE YEARS AS PRAPHAT HAD RPOMISED THE WEEK BEFORE. THE DEMONSTRATIONS MIGHT ALSO HAVE CAUSED THE CANCELLATION OF GENERAL PRAPHAT'S CELEBRATION OF HIS RECENT PROMOTION TO FIELD MARSHAL. THE STUDENT ASKED,

"WHEN WE HAD ONE MARSHAL THE SITUATION WAS

UNSTABLE. NOW WE HAVE TWO AND IT IS STILL
UNSTABLE. WILL FOUR MORE MAKE IT STABLE?"

ONE WEEK EARLIER GENERAL PRAPHAT CALLED THESE SAME
STUDENTS, "STUPID" ANDHNOT A "SCRATCH" COMPARED TO HIS
WNRE. ON JUNE 23, 1973 BANGKOK NEWSPAPERS HEADLINED
A STUDENT VICTORY
AND THIRAYUDH BOONMEE CALLING THIS
"ONLY A BEGINNING", MADE THE STATEMENT QUOTED ABOVE.
TWO DAYS LATER THE HEADLINE READ, "A ROTTEN DEAL, SAY
FIGHTING STUDENTS" AS THE NINE STUDENTS WERE NOT RE-
INSTATED AS PROMISED BUT EXPELLED INSTEAD. A WREATH
WAS LAID AT THE DEMOCRACY MONUMENT AS A SYMBOLIC
PROTEST AND THIRAYUDH HANDED IN HIS RESIGNATION SAYING,

"...THIS DECISION HAS LED ME TO BELIEVE THAT THERE
IS NO ONE WHO CAN BE TRUSTED, HOWEVER MUCH HE PROMISES."

DURING JULY, AUGUST, AND SEPTEMBER THE ISSUE OF DEMON-
STRATIONS AND THE CONSTITUTION WERE THE SUBJECT OF MUCH
EDITORIAL COMMENT IN THE PRESS. AND THEN CAME OCTOBER 6,
1973 WHEN 11 (A FIGURE THAT LATER GREW TO 13) POLITICAL
ACTIVISTS WERE ARRESTED FOR PASSING OUT LEAFLETS CALLING FOR
EARLY PROMULGATION OF A CONSTITUTION. THEIR HOMES WERE SEARCHED
AND THE GOVERNMENT ACCUSED SEVERAL OF THEM, INCLUDING A
FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, KHAISAENG SUKSAI, OF BEING INVOLVED
IN A COMMUNIST PLOT TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT. THE ARRESTS
SPARKED A WEEK OF PEACEFUL PROTESTS AND "HYDE PARK"
STYLE SPEECHES. BY THE DAY AND HOUR THEIR RANKS SWELLED.
ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 13, 1973 TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND
STUDENTS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS MARCHED ON DEMOCRACY
UNCLASSIFIED
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 BANGKO 16344 01 OF 03 181455Z

MONUMENT THREATENING VIOLENCE IF THE ARRESTEES WERE NOT
RELEASED. THEY WERE RELEASED BUT THE CHARGES WERE NOT
DROPPED. A CONSTITUTION WAS PROMISED BY OCTOBER 1974.

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 BANGKO 16344 02 OF 03 190912Z

11/43
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 PC-15 SNM-02 DEAE-00

CU-04 DRC-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 NIC-01 /168 W

----- 021552

R 181124Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7537

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 3 BANGKOK 16344

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CORRECT TEXT OMISSION)

IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF OCTOBER 14 THE BLOODSHED
BEGAN--REPORTEDLY SPARKED BY TEAR GAS FIRED AT STUDENTS
SEEKING AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING. BY NIGHTFALL AN
ESTIMATED TWO HUNDRED TO ONE THOUSAND DEMONSTRATORS AND
POLICE OR OTHER SUPPRESSION PERSONNEL HAD DIED. MARSHAL
THANOM RESIGNED. THE KING APPEALED FOR CALM AND SUPPORT
FOR SANYA THAMMASAK HIS DESIGNEE AS THE NEW PRIME MINISTER.
THE BLOODSHED CONTINUED FOR ANOTHER DAY. THE DMONSTRATORS
WANTED PRAPHAT OUT TOO. ON THE EVENING OF OCTOBER 15
THE RADIO REPORTED THAT THANOM, AND HIS SON, NARONG,
ALONG WITH PRAPHAT, HAD LEFT THE COUNTRY. PRIME MINISTER
SANYA APPEALED FOR RESPECT FOR BUDDHIST PRINCIPLES AGAINST
CAUSING DEATH AND DESTRUCTION. HE NOTED THE GREAT SADNESS
OF H.M. THE KING, THE QUEEN AND THE KING'S MOTHER. AT
9:00 P.M. FIVE STUDENT LEADERS APPEARED ON T.V. THEY ALL
SPOKE OF THEIR INTENTIONS AND HOPES NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.
BRIEFLY, THIS INCLUDED:

A STATEMENT OF THEIR ORIGINAL AIMS: "WE WERE NOT
OUT TO DESTROY THAILAND OR HER PEOPLE. OUR OBJECT-
TIVE WAS FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY FOR HER PEOPLE;"

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BANGKO 16344 02 OF 03 190912Z

AN ACCEPTANCE OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT AS CREATED "OF
THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE AND FOR THE PEOPLE, OF
THAILAND." H.M. THE KING HAD NOMINATED PROF. SANYA
THAMMASAK AND APPEALED FOR SUPPORT. THEY WERE NOW
PREPARED TO ACCEPT THIS AS A GOVERNNSNT COMMITTED
TO DEMOCRACY FOR THAILAND AND, IN THE SENSE THAT
IT CAME INTO BEING AS A RESULT OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS
OF THE PEOPLE AND WITH THE BLESSING OF THE KING, A
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT;

THEIR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE AND THEIR ROLE AS STUDENTS: THEY APPEALED FOR SUPPORT FROM PEOPLE IN THE PROVINCES TO KEEP BUILDING ON THIS BEGINNING FOR DEMOCRACY AND THEY FELT IT THEIR DUTY AS STUDENTS TO CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE FOR AND PROTECT TRUE DEMOCRACY IN THAILAND. FINALLY, THEY REGRETTED THAT SO MUCH BLOOD AND SO MANY LIVES HAD TO BE PAID FOR THIS NEW GOVERNMENT. TWO OR THREE OF THE STUDENTS APPEARED ON THE VERGE OF TEARS. ONE COULD HARDLY DOUBT THE SINCERITY AND COMMITMENT IN THEIR HEARTS AND MINDS. AND ONE CANNOT HELP BUT THINK THEY HAVE WON A GREAT VICTORY.

AS INDICATED ABOVE THERE IS NO PRECEDENT IN THAI HISTORY FOR THESE EVENTS. IT MUST BE ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IRONIES OF OUR TIME THAT THE STUDENTS OF BANGKOK, WITH THEIR CALLS FOR DEMOCRACY AND A CONSTITUTION, QUOTATIONS FROM ROUSSEAU, LOCKE ET. AL., HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THE "OVERTHROW" OF A GOVERNMENT THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THAILAND, WITH ITS QUOTATIONS FROM MAO TSE TUNG AND SEVEN YEARS OF ACTIVE GUERRILLA PSYCHO-POLITICAL WARFARE, HAS NEVER EVEN COME CLOSE TO THREATENING. IN SEVEN DAYS THE STUDENTS "MOBILIZED" SOME 200,000 ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY IN THEIR CAMPAIGN FOR A CONSTITUTION. WE ARE NOT SURE HOW MUCH THE COMMUNISTS MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THESE EVENTS. WE DO KNOW THAT THEY HAVE NO SIMILAR RECORD OF SUCCESS THROUGH THEIR EFFORTS AMONG THE THAI PEASANTS IN THE RICE PADDIES OF NORTHEAST THAILAND OR THE HILL TRIBES OF THE NORTH.

3. PERHAPS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENTS OF 1973 SHOULD BE LOOKED AT FROM AN EVEN WIDER PERSPECTIVE. A NEW POLITICAL UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BANGKO 16344 02 OF 03 190912Z

FORCE HAS DEVELOPED AND THE THAI POLITICAL EQUATION WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN. FROM THE SUKHOTHAI AND AYUDHYA PERIODS TO THE COUP IN 1932 POLITICS WAS CENTERED IN AND AROUND THE ROYAL COURT -- WHEREVER THAT WAS, AND NOT FOUND AT ALL IN THE RURAL AREAS OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL CITY. IN 1932 THERE OCCURRED A "SHIFT" IN THE FOCAL POINT OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY -- MANIFESTED IN A COUP AGAINST THE MONARCHY. THE THAI GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY, CREATED AND EVEN "MODERNIZED" ON THE INITIATIVE OF THE THAI MONARCHY, HAD BECOME MORE POWERFUL THAN THE ROYAL COURT--OR, AT LEAST THOSE INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS WITH DIRECT CONTROL OF THE INSTRUMENTS OF POWER HAD BECOME MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE POLITICAL INTERESTS OF THE BUREAUCRACY ITSELF THAN OF THE KING OR THE ROYAL COURT. IN ANY EVENT, IN THE COUP OF 1932 THE KING BECAME A "CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCH" WHO REIGNED AT THE PLEASURE OF THE NEW COMMANDECY OF POWER IN THE THAI BUREAU-

CRACY. THEY HAD USHERED IN A "NEW" ERA OF CLIQUE/COUP GROUP POLITICS IN THAILAND. BUT POLITIYB REMAINED THE PRESERVE AND CONCERN OF HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS LOCATED IN BANGKOK. POWER WAS NEVER DELEGATED TO ANYONE OUTSIDE THE CLIQUES AT THE T8. UE ROYAL THAI ARMY, THE NAVY, THE POLICE AND OCCASIONALLY MORE "CIVILIAN ORIENTED" BUREAU-CRATS COMPETED WITH EACH OTHER FOR THE SPOILS AND PREROGATIVES OF POWER.

4. BRIEF INTERLUDES OF "PARTICIPATORY POLITICS" IN THE FORM OF A PARLIAMENT 1947-8, 57-8, AND 69-71 HAVE BEEN TRIED. BUT POWER NEVER EXISTED IN THE PARLIAMENT ITSELF -- WHICH MIGHT BE SAID TO HAVE BEEN "PERMITTED" TO EXIST MORE FOR APPEARANCES VIS-A-VIS THE WESTERN WORLD THAN FOR THE INTERESTS OF THE RULING ELITE IN DETERMINING AND RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE OF THAILAND.

SPORADIC AND BRIEF CONCERN BEYOND THE NARROW CONFINES OF BUREAUCRATIC POWER POLITICS IN BANGKOK HAS BEEN CREATED WITHIN THE RTG LEADERSHIP BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THAILAND THROUGH ITS ACTIVITIES IN THE JUNGLES AND MOUNTAINS OF NORTH, NORTHEAST AND SOUTH THAILAND. INDEED, THE CPT REPRESENTED, SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN THE 1950'S, (BUT MORE SERIOUSLY BY ITS ACTIVITIES FROM 1964-5 TO THE PRESENT) THE FIRST ORGANIZED POLITICAL FORCE EVER DEVELOPED OUTSIDE

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 BANGKO 16344 02 OF 03 190912Z

OF THE TOPP ECHELONS OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT -- BE IT THE LBNNARCHY OR THE THAI BUREAUCRACY OF TODAY. IF REPRESENTED THE FIRST NON-ELITE BASED FORCE OFFERING AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND SYSTEM FOR THAILAND. OVER THE PASOMSEVEN YEARS COMMUNIST INSURGENTS HAVE CONTINUED TO EXPAND THEIR AREAS AND NUMBERS -- BUT THEY REMAIN A SMALL FORCE ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE ONLY ON THE FRINGES OF THAILAND.

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 BANGKO 16344 03 OF 03 181527Z

43
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 PC-15 SNM-02 DEAE-00

CU-04 DRC-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 NIC-01 /168 W

----- 012038

R 181124Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7538

UNCLAS SECTION 3 OF 3 BANGKOK 16344

THE YEAR 1973 WILL PROBABLY GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS THE MAJOR TURNING POINT IN THAI POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT. AND IT WILL BE SEEN BY MANY AS ONE OF THE MORE IRONIC DEVELOPMENTS IN MODERN SOUTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY. FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP AND ITS AMERICAN ADVISORS HAVE BEEN WORRYING ABOUT COMMUNIST INSURGENCY IN THE VILLAGES, RICE PADDIES AND MOUNTAINS IN WHAT REMAIN FRINGE AREAS OF THE THAI NATION STATE. OVER THAT PERIOD OF TIME IN SPITE OF ALL OUR JOINT EFFORTS THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO EXPAND THEIR NUMBER TO SOME 7,000 ARMED GUERRILLAS WITH PERHAPS 100,000 SUPPORTERS THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE NATION. STILL, THE THOUGHTS OF MAO TSE TUNG THAT HAVE PASSED THROUGH THE AIR IN THE COMMUNIST JUNGLE HIDE-OUTS HAD LESS OF AN IMPACT ON THE SECURITY AND STABILITY OF THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF MARSHALS PRAPHAT AND THANOM THAN THE THOUGHTS OF ST. AUGUSTINE, ROUSSEAU, EDMOND BURKE AND JOHN LOCKE IN THE HALLS OF THAMMASAT AND CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITIES OR ON THE FIELD AT SANAM LUANG. THE IRONY IS THAT THE STABILITY AND "INTERGRITY" OF THE THANOM-PRAPHAT GOVERNMENT WERE FIRST MOST SERIOUSLY THREATENED AND THEN DESTROYED NOT BY A COMMUNIST REVOLUTION BUT BY A DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION LED BY THE CHILDREN OF ITS LEADING BUREAUCRATS. IT HAD TAKEN THE COMMUNISTS SEVEN YEARS OF INTENSE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORT

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BANGKO 16344 03 OF 03 181527Z

TO DEVELOP A FORCE OF 7,000 GUERRILLAS AND POSSIBLY 100,000 SUPPORTERS. IT TOOK SEVEN DAYS FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF 13 POLITICAL ACTIVISTS IN BANGKOK TO RESULT IN AN ORGANIZED FORCE OF 200,000 STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY TO MARCH ON THE DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT DEMANDING A DEMOCRATIC CONSITTUTION.

5. THE STUDENTS, HOWEVER, ARE NEITHER ORGANIZED NOR PREPARED TO GOVERN THE COUNTRY. THE THAI BUREAUCRACY REMAINS

AND WILL HAVE TO CARRY ON ITS ADMINISTRATION OF THE COUNTRY. THIS WILL BE POSSIBLE ONLY WITH THE CONSENT AND COOPERATION OF THOSE OUTSIDE WHAT M.R. KUKRIT IN "DIALOGUE ON THAI POLITICS" CALLS "THE CIRCLE." OBTAINING THIS SUPPORT, AS WELL AS MOTIVATION WITHIN THE THAI BUREAUCRACY TO SERVE BETTER THAN THEY HAVE IN THE PAST, WILL REQUIRE, IN TURN, THE "ACTIVE" LEADERSHIP OF ANOTHER POLITICAL POWER NOW THRUST INTO THE BREACH BY EVENTS BEYOND HIS CONTROL -- H.M. THE KING. M.R. KUKRIT DURING USOM SEMINAR VIII (MARCH 29, 1973) MADE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS:

"THE KING HAS TURNED OUT TO BE A TREMENDOUS FORCE IN THE COUNTRY AT THE PRESENT MOMENT. WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT HE IS GOING TO TAKE ACTION. SINCE THE KING IS REVERED ANYWAY IN OUR COUNTRY, NO MATTER WHETHER HE DOES RIGHT OR WRONG HE IS GOING TO BECOME A STABILIZING INFLUENCE ON THAI POLITICS IF WE GIVE HIM A CERTAIN SORT OF VENUE IN WHICH HE CAN EXERCISE HIS ACTIVITIES. AS I SAID IN THE "DIALOGUE," THE KING AND THE PEOPLE ARE STILL OUTSIDE THE BUREAUCRATIC CIRCLE AND VERY MUCH TOGETHER NOW. WHAT THE KING SAYS THE PEOPLE FOLLOW AND BELIEVE AND VICE VERSA. THE KING DOESN'T SEEM TO CARE VERY MUCH FOR THIS GOVERNMENT; HE ONLY CARES VERY MUCH ABOUT HIS PEOPLE. WE HAVE THIS SITUATION, AND EITHER TO BREAK THE CIRCLE OR TO BRING EVERYONE INTO THE CIRCLE YOU CAN'T NEGLECT THE KING."

THE "VENUE" FOR THE KING HAS NOW BEEN CREATED. HOW DEEPLY INVOLVED HE WILL HAVE TO BECOME REMAINS UNCLEAR AT THIS TIME. WHETHER HE CAN BE EFFECTIVE IS ALSO OPEN
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BANGKO 16344 03 OF 03 181527Z

TO QUESTION. WHAT IS NOT OPEN TO QUESTION IS THAT THE "MERIT" OF THE KING HAS BEEN BROUGHT TO BEAR -- AND THE STUDENTS NO LESS THAN SANYA THAMMASAK FEEL HIS WILL SHOULD BE RESPECTED AT THIS CRITICAL POINT IN TIME.

5. THE STUDENTS BEGAN THE YEAR 1973 AS "PHUUNOJ" -- LITTLE PEOPLE WITHOUT POWER. THE "PHUUYAI" THE MEN WITH POWER, HAVE NOW LEFT THE COUNTRY. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THAI HISTORY A GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN CHANGED BY THE "PHUUNOJ" AND THERE HAS BEEN A CLEAR DEMONSTRATION OF THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF MILITARY/POLICE POWER IN AN INTERNAL POLITICAL CONTEST BETWEEN "LITTLE PEOPLE" WITH A POPULAR CAUSE AND "BIG PEOPLE" WITH ONLY THEIR WEAPONS BUT NO JUSTICE I.E., THEY ARE BUT "ROBBER BANDS". IT MAY WELL BE THAT NOW "POLITICS" IN THAILAND WILL SHIFT BACK TO BEING THE "PRESERVE" OF THE "BIG PEOPLE" WHO HAVE POWER

AS DEFINED IN TRADITIONAL THAI TERMS. BUT IT CAN NEVER BE THE SAME POLITICAL EQUATION AGAIN SIMPLY BECAUSE, UNLIKE THE COUP OF 1932 WHICH USHERED IN "CLIQUE POLITICS", THE NEW SOURCE OF POWER THAT CHANGED THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE ITS ROOTS IN TRADITIONAL THAI POLITICAL VALUES, ATTITUDES AND PATTERNS OF ACTION. THE STUDENTS HAVE ACQUIRED A "LEGITIMACY" OF THEIR OWN AND A UNIQUE POSITION, REINFORCED PERHAPS BY AN EXPECTATION THAT THEY WILL PLAY AN "OMBUDSMAN" TYPE ROLE IN FUTURE THAI POLITICS. THEIR ROLE WILL BE TO GUARD AGAINST EXCESSIVE CONCERN WITH NARROW INTER-BUREAUCRATIC POLITICAL AND PERSONAL INTERESTS THAT COMPROMISE THE JUSTICE AND WELFARE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE AS A WHOLE.

THE STUDENTS HAVE WON. THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED A NEW KIND OF POWER AND ITS APPARENT "MERIT" (I.E. IN TRADITIONAL THAI-BUDDHIST TERMS THEY SUCCEEDED BECAUSE THEY WERE "RIGHT" AND DESERVING DUE PERHAPS TO MERIT ACHIEVED IN THE PAST.) IT MAY BE ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT TO NOTE THAT SEVERAL OF THE STUDENTS NOW INTEND TO SPEND SOME TIME IN THE MONKHOOD TO EARN MORE MERIT FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FALLEN COMRADES. THEY WILL USE THIS POWER IF THEY HAVE TO IN THE FUTURE. AND THOSE AGAINST WHOM THEY MAY HAVE TO USE IT WILL PROBABLY NOT BE PREPARED TO RESORT TO THE TYPE OF FORCE APPLIED SO INEFFECTIVELY ON OCTOBER 14-15, 1973.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 BANGKO 16344 03 OF 03 181527Z

UNGER

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, CONSTITUTION, POLITICAL STABILITY, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, MILITARY GOVERNMENT, CIVIL DISORDERS, POLITICAL SITUATION, CASUALT IES, STUDENT GROUPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BANGKO16344
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731025/aaaaashq.tel
Line Count: 471
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 9
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: martinjw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03-Dec-2001 by bryansd0>; APPROVED <07 FEB 2002 by martinjw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ONE MISSION OFFICER'S VIEW OF STUDENT POWER IN THAILAND INTRODUCTION. FOLLOWING IS THE THOUGHTFUL BUT PERSONAL
TAGS: PINS, TH, NSCT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005